

**Renaissance and Reformation**  
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**Duplessis-Mornay, Charlotte Arbaleste, Anne de Chaufepié, and Anne Marguerite Petit du Noyer. The Huguenot Experience of Persecution and Exile: Three Women's Stories. Ed. Colette H. Winn. Trans. Lauren King and Colette H. Winn.**

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**Duplessis-Mornay, Charlotte Arbaleste, Anne de Chaufepié, and Anne Marguerite Petit du Noyer.**

***The Huguenot Experience of Persecution and Exile: Three Women's Stories.***  
**Ed. Colette H. Winn. Trans. Lauren King and Colette H. Winn.**

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 68 / Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 560. Toronto: Iter Press / Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2019. Pp. xiii, 144. ISBN 978-0-86698-618-2 (paperback) US\$41.95.

Charlotte Arbaleste Duplessis-Mornay, Anne de Chaufepié, and Anne Marguerite Petit du Noyer were three remarkable Huguenot women who shared a common faith and told their stories of persecution and survival through personal *mémoires*. Testimony to their resilience, strength, and bravery has been preserved in their original French manuscripts in the archives of Chantilly and Paris. In this volume of The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe Series, Colette Winn and Lauren King's translation offers English readers an opportunity to hear and observe the stories of these extraordinary women's imprisonment, persecution, and exile during one of the most disastrous episodes of French history.

Winn's translated edition of Madame de Mornay and Madame du Noyer's *memoires* and Anne de Chaufepié's *journal* is accompanied by an extensive introduction, a chronological timeline of contemporary historical events, and a list of other testimonial literature by Huguenot women. The fact that a significant number of such tales are extant speaks to the unwavering dedication of the writers to their faith, their determination to tell their stories, and the ambition of some to create exemplary tales of retribution, sacrifice, and survival. The three women in this book shared a common faith but wrote with distinct voices and purpose (24). Mornay composed her memoir as guidance for her son. Du Noyer, who had to re-adopt her Calvinist faith after a period of abandonment, aims to show "evidence of her determination to remain steadfast in her faith" (23). Du Noyer also made a career as a writer and an editor. Anne de Chaufepié's case is unique. She does not make her intentions clear in this short journal. Her decision to escape and resettle in a new community may have prompted her to write, but Winn gives us another possible reason. In Calvinist diaspora communities, it was a common practice for the members to read aloud their tales of persecution and perseverance (20). This is evident

in Anne's skilful use of the martyrdom language of divine election and higher purpose.

Winn's introduction to the translated sources not only provides a biographical summary of the authors, but also places their stories in the context of the historical events that shaped their experiences and by extension the purpose of the texts they left behind. The lives of these women, as Winn demonstrates, must be understood within the historical narratives of the St. Bartholomew Day Massacre, the mission of the *dragonnades*, and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes that resulted in the exodus of the Huguenots from France. They found themselves in situations of danger and imprisonment and used creative means to escape. They survived through alliances, perseverance, and cunning, which speaks to their agency at a time when they were "ostracized" both as women and as Huguenots, Winn argues (2).

Winn also prompts us to read these memoirs as an example of "tales of survival," a genre that became common in the seventeenth century with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the Huguenot's exodus. The firsthand experiences and testimonies written by Huguenot women speaks to a period of political and religious unrest that not only had an impact on the lives of those involved in combat but also on the civilians. Their "tales of survival," however, are unique, because they speak of what mattered to the women writers. Three aspects of their writings, Winn claims, make their stories differ significantly from those written by men (24). They focused on their journeys of crossing many borders, sometimes in disguise; they were worried about their families in crisis; and finally, they demonstrated how female friendship and solidarity with Catholic women helped them escape and re-settle. These remarkable tales of survival show the active conduct of Protestant women during a time when Catholic polemics saw them as immoral, weak, and foolish. On the contrary, these Huguenot women drew strength from their faith and played an important role in preserving and spreading it.

Winn and King's translation is a welcome addition to the Other Voice series. They bring us thrilling and vivid stories of three women as daughters, wives, and mothers. These tales speak not only of their personal endeavours but also to the political instability and civil unrest that left a red and bloody stain in France's history. The aftermath left a lasting effect of hatred and periods of discriminatory reactions that went beyond the fifty years of the Wars of Religion. The publication of this translation is timely for scholars of early modern but

also contemporary Europe. Four centuries later, France yet again struggles to cope with an increasing sentiment of religious and ethnic antagonism and social exclusion within its borders. Perhaps narratives such as these told by the Huguenot women offer a lesson about the values of civic liberty and freedom of religious practices as essential elements of cultural diversity and socio-political stability.

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**Griffin, Andrew.**

*Untimely Deaths in Renaissance Drama: Biography, History, Catastrophe.*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019. Pp. ix, 197. ISBN 978-1-4875-0348-2 (hardcover) \$60.

It is an axiom of this stimulating and provocative book that in the decades before history was recognized as a scholarly endeavour, it was variously practised by poets, lawyers, record-keepers, playwrights, and others. For Andrew Griffin, English Renaissance drama provided the contemporary audience with a site wherein claims about historical change (caused by the various interpreters of history) were treated in a frequently conflicting manner. Griffin finds that it is in the narrative abruptions—or disruptions—in several plays that we can discover the strategies through which early modern culture made narrative sense of biography and fatality.

In his Introduction, Griffin defines an “untimely death” to be a death “which arrives before it should” according to available forms of narrative explanation. In contrast, a “timely” death occurs when it “seems to follow naturally from the pattern of life that came before it” (5). Scholars today must heed the forms of historical writing if we are to understand the historiographical *mentalité* of the early modern period. For example, he opines that a comparison of the deaths of Shakespeare’s Richard II and Henry V illustrates the relationship among the conflicted ideas that might characterize the early modern historical imagination. Richard II’s death is foretold by John of Gaunt whose early remark “More are men’s ends marked than their lives before” (2.1.1) captures the essence of Richard’s life: his poetic comments on himself and on kingship